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Conference Abstract

Possibilities and Pitfalls with Establishing a National Data Store for Natural Science Collections

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Abstract

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) has initiated the development of the National Biodiversity Information System to provide access to integrated South African biodiversity information. The aim of the project is to centrally manage all biodiversity information to support researchers, conservationists, policy and decision-makers in achieving their goals, support planners in making sensible decisions, and help SANBI understand the anthropogenic impact on biodiversity. The project is set to deliver a centralised web-based infrastructure to capture, aggregate, manage, discover, analyse and visualise biodiversity data and associated information through a suite of tools and spatial layers. The infrastructure is a Microsoft technology stack with microservices component architecture (http://microservices.io/patterns/microservices.html), which is vital to building an application out of small collaborating services, stemming from integrating the enterprise system.

SANBI conducted a review of the data holdings of the individual herbaria and museums in South Africa. The intention is to have a federated approach to data management, exposing what is available as a collection but ensuring that each individual natural science collection has full ownership and management control over their data within a defined framework and governed by internationally accepted data policies and standards. The presentation

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highlights the opportunities and unexpected difficulties with developing a national botanical and zoological collections data management service in South Africa.

Keywords

natural science collections, biodiversity information, South Africa, data aggregation

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